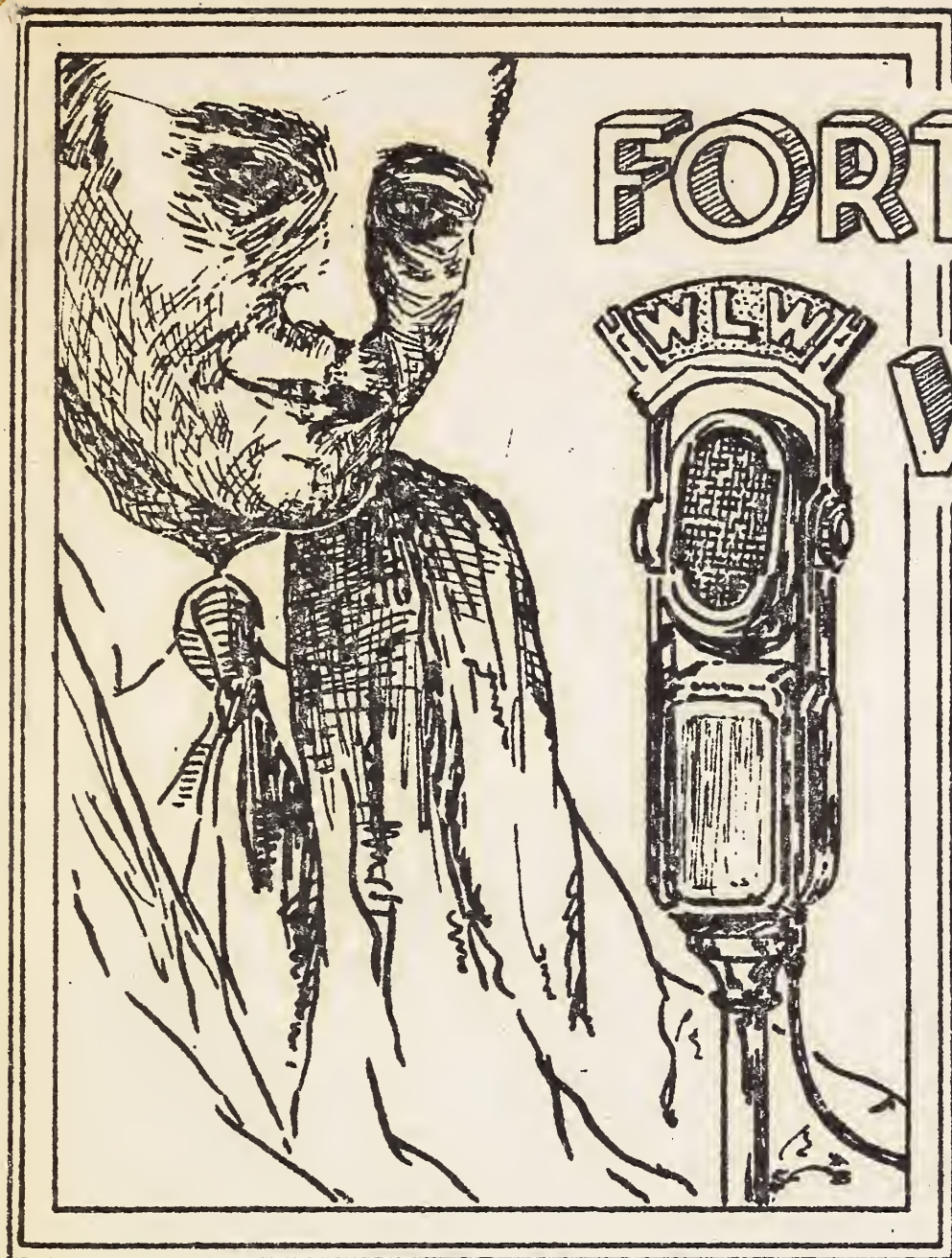


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SEP 13 1940



FORTUNES WASHED AWAY

**A Series of
Dramatizations
of Better
Land Use**

No. 124 September 7, 1940 1:15 p.m.

"COVER CROPS"

W·L·W CINCINNATI

**United States Department of Agriculture
Soil Conservation Service
Dayton · Ohio**

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1940
SEP 13 1940
1:15 p.m.

SOUND: Thunder and rain...

ANNOUNCER

Fortunes Washed Away!

ORGAN THEME: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

ANNOUNCER

After the harvest comes fall and winter, and fall-plowed fields may look bleak and barren, with tattered corn stubble or downtrodden tobacco stalks. Or, fall-plowed fields may present a pleasant panorama of lush meadows, green shoots standing as silent sentinels against the wintry rains. Farmers of yesteryear chose the bleak and barren fields. Farmers of today weave a conservation pattern, with winter cover crops as their loom. Such a farmer is Lee Ruch, who uses a member of the bean family...clover.

NARRATOR

Clover? Well, there are about 300 kinds of clover...alsike, red, white, sweet, bur...oh, I guess you know most of them. But come down to Franklin County, Tennessee, and we'll show you clover.... come down to the Highland Rim of the Cumberland Plateau...that's in the heart of the Tennessee Valley, just about halfway between Muscle Shoals and Norris Dam...and we'll show you clover. It will be crimson.

ORGAN: I'M LOOKING OVER A FOUR LEAF CLOVER.

ANNOUNCER

Crimson clover is the most important winter annual legume of the central section of the Eastern States, Kentucky, Tennessee, and the curve from Mississippi to Delaware. It is especially important to Franklin County, Tennessee, the home of John Ruch, who, County Agricultural Agent T. L. Mayes, will tell you, "put Franklin County on the map agriculturally". And Lee Ruch...

NARRATOR

I wouldn't say that. I don't guess Dad ever realized what he had done for the eroded fields of Tennessee. He was just one of those men who tried to farm the best way he knew how. It all started back in...let's see,...yes, back in 1892. We had come in from Belvidere on a Saturday and.....

SOUND: Train at standstill, chuff-chuffing....

JOHN

Mighty big engine, boy.

LEE

Gee, dad...must be the biggest in the whole wide world.

JOHN

Oh, I wouldn't say that. They've got some bigger ones on this run from Chattanooga to Memphis.

LEE

When will they come through here?

JOHN

Practically every day.

LEE

Can we come down to see 'em?

JOHN

We will not. You're gonna get those tater bugs cleaned up this week, or we won't have any taters. And don't you believe that there spiel about the bug powder. You just go ahead and use it.

LEE

What spiel?

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

... ..

JOHN (slowly)

You know...the man, he sold some powder, good for bugs,
but the man, he must have lied.
It wasn't good for the bugs at all.
The poor little bugs all died.

JOHN (Laughs loudly, then pauses)

Get it, Lee? The powder wasn't good for...oh...never mind.

LEE (Not even hearing him)

Dad....

JOHN

Yes?

LEE

That's a big engine, isn't it?

JOHN (Getting a little impatient)

Yes, Lee, it's a big engine.

LEE

I was just wondering, if...

KILLEBREW (fading in)

Would you like to get up in the cab?

LEE

You mean...

JOHN

He's been itching to get up there ever since it stopped for water.

KILLEBREW

Well, that's natural for a kid his age. Every boy wants to be an
engineer, or a fireman, or a policeman.

LEE

Not me!

KILLEBREW

What! Can it be true.

LEE (slowly)

I want to be a good farmer.....like my dad.

KILLEBREW (to John)

Oh, you're a farmer?

JOHN

Of a sort. I've got a farm out by Belvidere. Getting washed up, though.

KILLEBREW

I understand. Plenty of farms are washing away around here. Well, my name's Killebrew. I'm what you might call the agricultural agent for the railroad.

JOHN

How d'ya do. I'm John Ruch. Well, I'll say one thing, we need agricultural agents.

KILLEBREW

That goes double. We need good farmers. And this is your son?

JOHN

Yep, this is Lee.

LEE

Hello, sir.

KILLEBREW

Hello, Lee. (TO JOHN) Mr. Ruch, I've got a proposition to make to you...oh no! Don't turn away. It's not going to cost you anything.

JOHN

What's it all about, then?

KILLEBREW

Simply this. You've heard of Robert Essary, haven't you? He's the...

JOHN

Oh, Essary! Sure he's the commissioner of agriculture.

KILLEBREW

Yes. He's interested in crimson clover. It's never been tried around here, and I thought you might like to try, shall we say, just a peck.

JOHN

We will say, just a peck. I don't want to waste any of my land.

(LAUGHING) Sure, I'm willing to try it. But where do you come in?

KILLEBREW

Anything that helps agriculture helps our railroad, Mr. Ruch. Prosperous farms mean prosperous cities, you know. And I agree with Mr. Essary that crimson clover may mean the salvation of some of these eroded fields in Middle Tennessee.

JOHN

What's it like, anyhow?

KILLEBREW

I don't know a lot about it. Near as I can tell, it was brought to America about 1818 from Europe...they grow it plenty over there. The Patent Office sent the seeds around the country a few years ago, but nobody around here ever tried it. It's a soil building legume, and they tell me it's especially good for winter cover.

JOHN

All right, Mr. Killebrew...you send me that crimson clover seed. If it'll build up the land, or if it will just prevent it from washing away, I'm for it.

ORGAN: Sneak in I'M LOOKING OVER A FOUR LEAF CLOVER.

NARRATOR

Yes sir, that was how we got our first peck of crimson clover seed. Today, Franklin County leads the nation in growing it, I guess... around 20,000 acres will be planted this fall. And I'll say this... if you've ever seen a field of crimson clover in full bloom, you know it's a sight not easily forgotten. It's pretty, sure...and it holds this soil of ours.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

ANNOUNCER

That is the true story of the introduction of crimson clover into Franklin County, Tennessee...the story of John Ruch. And now, once again we turn to the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, and here is Gene Charles.

CHARLES

Thanks, _____. That story is still going on....because Lee Ruch continues to be an outstanding producer of crimson clover seed in a county that is outstanding. Outstanding, too, is the annual winter cover crops campaign that the Agricultural Extension Service conducts in Tennessee each year. The county agricultural agents have really been working to put the campaign over. Our old friend, R. H. Morrish, the regional agronomist for the Soil Conservation Service here in the Ohio Valley, is with us today...and he has been in close touch with the campaign. How are they getting along, Hipe?

MORRISH

More acres will be seeded to winter cover this year than in any other year in history, Gene. Tennessee has been planting about a million acres of winter cover crops and farmers down there are probably going to seed close to another two million acres this fall. But there is still plenty of land subject to soil erosion that should be covered.

CHARLES

And now is the time to put that cover on.

MORRISH

The earlier the better. That's one trouble...all winter cover crops aren't really winter cover, but spring cover crops...because they're not seeded early enough. I was talking to H. E. Hendricks about that the other day. You know him, Gene...

CHARLES

Sure, the extension agronomist in Tennessee.

MORRISH

Well, Hendricks said that the biggest cover crop problem in Tennessee today is getting the corn cut and shocked, so that the land can be seeded to winter cover. You see, corn fields that are cut and shocked are usually seeded to winter cover, while standing stalk land is nearly always left without a green cover.

CHARLES

So your advice, then, is Mr. Farmer: now is the time to cut and shock your corn and seed it down for the winter.

MORRISH

September is the time, Gene...and you'll find that it is a practice that pays dividends. S. C. Jones, Kentucky's extension agronomist always used to say..."There ought to be a law to make every farmer keep his rolling land covered over the winter."

CHARLES

Hipe, would you say it costs just as much to do without winter cover crops as it does to plant them?

MORRISH

That's a neat way of putting it, Gene. And you're right...100 percent right. And here's why: An acre of bare sloping ground will lose more than enough water and soil and plant food during a winter and early spring to pay for the small amount of seed needed to plant a winter cover crop.

CHARLES

That's what I was hoping you'd say.

MORRISH

There's another angle, one that is especially appropriate this fall, and that's the drouth that we have had in many sections, especially in some parts of the Ohio Valley.

CHARLES

Well, what's drouth got to do with winter cover crops, Hipe?

MORRISH

That calls for a little explanation.

CHARLES

Let's have it, I'm waiting.

MORRISH

You see, Gene, during a drouth the plants aren't growing. Therefore, they are not using up soil nitrogen as it is being made available. This allows for its accumulation in amounts above normal.

CHARLES

Yes, I know that's true.

MORRISH

Well, it isn't hard to figure out, then, that this increased supply of nitrogen can be lost through erosion and leaching during the winter months if the soil is not protected.

CHARLES

Now I get the connection between winter cover crops and drouth. It boils down to this: We've had a drouth this year, and that means more available nitrogen in the soil. And if we don't protect the soil with winter cover crops we'll lose more nitrogen than usual through erosion and leaching.

MORRISH

That's it in a couple of nut shells, Gene. I'd like to point out one other thing in that connection, too. It is important to fertilize following drouths because it will take additional phosphorus and potash to balance the abnormally large nitrogen supply.

CHARLES

That's mighty good advice, and thanks to you R. H. Morrish, regional agronomist for the Soil Conservation Service.

SOUND: Telegraph key clicking.

ANNOUNCER

News in the conservation world!

CHARLES

Well, _____, the best piece of news I have this week is a new farmer's bulletin. Hipe Morrish brought up the drouth, and that's right in line with this bulletin. It's called "Stock-water Developments; Wells, Springs, and Ponds."

ANNOUNCER

That sounds as if it might be interesting reading for many of our farmers who had to haul water this summer for their livestock, and even for their own use.

CHARLES

It does look like a good bulletin, _____. It's written by two agricultural engineers for the Soil Conservation Service. It contains 70 pages of information, and the text is well-illustrated with photographs and diagrams. Say, Hipe Morrish, I excused you a minute ago, but have you read this new bulletin?

MORRISH

I haven't read it thoroughly, Gene, but I have sketched through rather hurriedly. It appeals to me as handy information for almost any farmer in this section of the country. As an agronomist I know an adequate supply of stock water is absolutely essential to profitable grazing.

ANNOUNCER

If you would like a copy of the bulletin "Stock-water Developments" just send a penny postcard to Soil Conservation, Dayton, Ohio. Any more news in the conservation world, Gene?

CHARLES

Well, let's see what I have here. Oh, yes, here's an item from the Louisville Courier-Journal of last week. Suppose you read part of it.

ANNOUNCER

Okay, Gene. Here's the item: It's from Russellville, Kentucky. "Not a voice was raised in opposition to the proposal that a soil conservation district be created in the southern half of Logan county, at a public hearing in the courthouse. The hearing was conducted by the state soil conservation committee. The area embraced by the proposed district is about 16 miles wide and 26 miles long, immediately north of the Kentucky-Tennessee line. The next step is the holding of a referendum in which all landowners in the proposed district may vote for or against a district."

CHARLES

Thanks, _____, that was nicely done. The Logan county district, if it's finally created, will be the first one in Kentucky. Let's see now, as of August 1 there were 359 soil conservation districts covering nearly 226 million acres of land in 34 states.

ANNOUNCER

The district movement is certainly spreading mighty fast.

CHARLES

Yes, it is, _____. Let me give you a hopeful quote or two from a speech the other day by Dr. Hugh Bennett, chief of the Soil Conservation Service. Dr. Bennett said: "Figuring from the present rate of district formation it seems likely that by 1942 there will be more than 600 soil conservation districts covering perhaps 400 million acres of land over the country as a whole. If all these districts are properly organized and administered it is distinctly possible that we may begin to catch up with the erosion problem on a nationwide scale. And by 1950, provided there is no let up in the districts movement, I am confident that the forces of conservation will have the upper hand." That's the end of the quotation from Dr. Bennett, the outstanding authority on soil conservation in the world. The significant part of the statement I have just read, _____, is Dr. Bennett's qualification "provided there is no let up in the districts movement". That's the important thing. If we can keep on going at our present rate, and never let down for a minute, then we can, perhaps by 1950 as Dr. Bennett says, have established in our great country a permanent system of agriculture.

ORGAN THEME: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

CHARLES (on cue)

This is Gene Charles, speaking for the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, saying goodbye until next Saturday when we'll bring you another story of "Fortunes Washed Away".

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.



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